The First Annual WISH LIST
Entertainment WEEKLY
L2T
LISTEN 2 THIS
#791A NOVEMBER 5, 2004
PLUS: The Most Rockin' GIFT GUIDE Ever!
Starring Readers' Favorite The Donnas!
With Special Appearances By:
Good Charlotte, Maroon 5, Sum 41, Liz Phair, Switchfoot, Vanessa Carlton, Fatboy Slim, Chingy, Otto the Bus Driver, & The O.C.'s Josh Schwartz
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Amped

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ON THE COVER The Donnas photographed for L2T by Matthias Clamer on Sept. 8, 2004, in New York City

(COVER) THE DONNAS: ALLISON ROBERTSON, BRETT ANDERSON, MAYA FONG, AND TORRY CASTELLANO; STYLING: APRIL JOHNSON-HOFFENBERG; HAIR: COREY MORRIS FOR SALLY HERSHBERGER; MAKEUP: KUMI CRAIG
(THIS PAGE) RUFUS WAINWRIGHT: MICHAEL LAVINE/CPI

Welcome to Listen2This' first annual Wish List, which is all about fulfilling your desires and the dreams of a bunch of rock stars. (Wow. That's so Oprah. But really...)

The Wish List

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIAN NORTHEAST

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHIAS CLAMER

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

HANDS DOWN, L2T READERS CHOSE THE DONNAS AS THE WISH LIST COVER BAND. ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.

BY LEAH GREENBLATT

"ARE YOU GIRLS MOVIE stars?" the waiter at a midtown Manhattan diner asks. "It looks like you're learning your lines." The four members of the Donnas look up from the stapled printouts they're studying and break out into laughter. "Yeah," guitarist Allison Robertson deadpans. "Don't you recognize us?"

Perhaps he caught their musical cameos in teen flicks like 1999's *Drive Me Crazy* (as their alter egos, the Electrocutes) and, earlier that year, *Jawbreaker*.

ROBERTSON

ANDERSON

CASTELLANO

FORD

More likely, though, he's seen them in their videos on MTV, where the ladies, each 25, will be taping a segment promoting their sixth full-length collection of hard-hitting, diesel-and-lip-gloss rawk, *Gold Medal*, this very afternoon. First, though, they need breakfast, and the pages they're perusing aren't scripts but copies of reader responses to Listen2This' recent Wish List poll; the Donnas were overwhelmingly chosen above other popular acts like Good Charlotte, Modest Mouse, and Ludacris to front the first stand-alone issue of L2T, and reader reasoning was, well, enthusiastic. "'I like to Jazzercize to "Who Invited You" [their 2003 single],'" reads bassist Maya Ford. "Yeah!" she hoots. Singer Brett Anderson offers another: "'It's interesting to hear about women f---ing in cars.' That one's pretty good." Drummer Torry Castellano pulls a mock-skeptical face as she reads: "I like that we're 'a little more focused on the music than the ego stuff.' Just a little, though." Robertson smiles. "It's just cool they think we rock."

Rocking, in fact, is just what the ladies at the table (present reporter excluded) have been doing for more than a decade. Formed in a Palo Alto, Calif., garage in 1993 as Ragady Anne, and later the Electrocutes, the four best friends, bound by a love of metal, punk, riot-grrrl rock, and the Ramones, eventually became the Donnas rock juggernaut they are today. Though their fresh faces belie it, it's been a long, often rocky trip from junior-high-outcast status to underground cult success and bright-lights MTV stardom; seemingly in acknowledgement of those achievements, all four have recently dropped their longstanding "Donna" monikers and gone back to the names God (or, whatever, their parents) gave them. Over plates of deliciously greasy hangover fare, the girls talk about life, love, and the pursuit of the perfect handbag.

ON BEING CHOSEN FOR THE L2T COVER

TORRY CASTELLANO Wow, that's such an honor that they picked us. [*A chorus of* awesomes *and* cools *fills the table.*] Over all those other bands?

L2T You guys actually won by a landslide. But it might help to know too that our readership is about 85 percent male.

ALLISON ROBERTSON Most of our fans are male. We want to change that, though. I think we didn't realize why girls weren't listening to us as much or coming to the shows, but after we got signed and we started doing things that normally we wouldn't have done—doors that weren't really open to us when we were on an indie label [Berkeley punk stalwart Lookout!]—it started to change. A lot of the stuff was TV, fashiony magazines, or movies, but those were the only things that younger girls really responded to.

> "ONE GIRL I THOUGHT WAS A GOOD FRIEND, ★ I WENT ON FRIENDSTER, AND SHE WAS TALKING S--- ABOUT US. ★ I WAS REALLY BUMMED OUT"

...THE GOOD OLD DAYS

AR L7 were one of our main inspirations when we started—we just wanted to kick people's asses. We probably had more daydreams about kicking people's asses literally, but we really wanted to go on stage and kick their asses like L7 did. To make people go, "They're really good, they're tight, and they're not playing girly music, they're playing metal." L7 didn't care about being pretty; they cared about putting on a good show—about being entertaining and not necessarily having to do it in a feminine way.

TC We didn't have a lot of friends in high school. There were a few, mostly girls, and some of them we keep in touch with. But then there are the ones that we stopped hanging out with near the end that weren't very supportive of our band, and those [relationships] are kind of awkward.

BRETT ANDERSON Some of those girls actually sent us flowers at *Saturday Night Live*, and we were like, "Wow, that's really nice, but we don't even know your last name." It was a sweet gesture, that they're proud of us, but it was really weird. And one girl that I thought was a really good friend, I went on Friendster, and she was talking s--- about us. I was really bummed out. Friendster's the worst for spreading gossip.

TOTAL COVERAGE

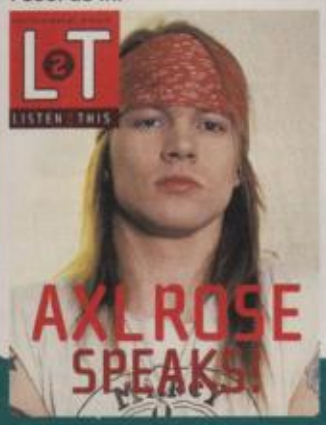
Readers' choice the Donnas rekindle some heavy metal memories—and create some new ones!—while nominating their wish-cover candidates

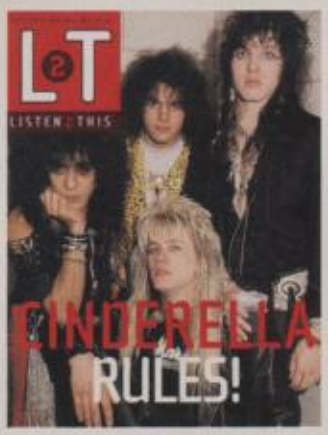
Guns N' Roses

Torry Castellano It would say they were getting back together.

Brett Anderson It would actually be awesome to have the new Guns N' Roses *and* the old Guns N' Roses.

TC Ooh, and on the inside they could have pictures of that chicken coop that Buckethead records in.





Cinderella

Allison Robertson They're one of our favorite bands. I always felt like they got pigeonholed as the wrong kind of sound. Everybody thinks of them as just glammy hair metal—they really weren't. And they look great.

Vaz Hoil

TC They're just some guys from L.A., I think.

BA They gave us a tape, and we grew obsessed. One song is called "Wild Thighz." And in almost every song after it, they talk about wild thighs.

TC It's kind of a theme record.

AR We get obsessed with our fans. We're like our fans' superfans.

AC/DC (with Bon Scott)

AR We don't want to be rude to Brian Johnson, because he is awesome. But it would be cool if they sang together.

BA It would be like Sammy Hagar and David Lee Roth, but they wouldn't be battling, there would be love between them.

...PLAYING THE CELEBRITY GAME

BA When you do movies, you don't normally hang out with the actors, unless they want to bone you or something. They're usually just like, "Hey, dudes," trying to see whether or not you're easy, even if they don't necessarily think you're hot.

AR Adrian Grenier did want to check out Torry's kit, though [on the set of *Drive Me Crazy*].

BA Like we give a s---.

AR When we meet people who are famous, we don't usually relate because we're not really famous. So it's not like we're wanting to talk to them about famous-type stuff. Still, Kirsten Dunst is a fan, and she's really cool. She came backstage to meet us in L.A. and was so sweet. That feels pretty weird, that she wants to meet us, you know?

TC And Leelee Sobieski left her purse on stage for some reason.

BA It was this bag I'd been wanting forever, like I was cutting pictures of it out of magazines, and for a minute I thought it was a gift.

MAYA FORD We didn't want to have to poke around in it, but we didn't know what to do, so I pulled out the license and saw whose it was.

BA And then we returned it. [*Sighs*] She was very nice about it.

...GROUPIES AND FANS

MF I've been asked to sign [a certain male body part] before, but I never have.

TC I feel like it's a little different [with male] than girl groupies. They'll just be like, [*affecting sweet boy voice*] "Hi!" They don't come up to me like, "Hey, baby, let's go," you know?... Well, actually, maybe they do.

MF They do that to me sometimes. And sometimes I go. But not very often. Sometimes *I* go up to *them* if they're really cute.

AR They usually think that we're tough chicks and that if they send us the initial message, we're the ones who are going to pursue it, and we're not. We have boyfriends, you know?

TC A lot of times the fans are actually really shy...and it's sweet. We get a lot of Christmas cards. There's this one Japanese guy who sends us each a birthday card.

AR Two of our fans brought us a little cookbook they had made at a show, and they were like, "We tried to make it recipes that you could make on the road!"

MF Was that Danny? He made me a Michael Jackson joke book. 'Cause I love to tell them on stage.

...THEIR FRIENDSHIP

TC We don't really fight. We all make it a goal to get along. I feel like that's kind of the big thing—we don't want to make anyone feel bad, and we want to be supportive.

L2T Have you guys seen the Metallica documentary *Some Kind of Monster*?

BA Yeah, our therapist loved it. [*Laughs*] I'm kidding!

ROSE: GEORGE CHIN/WIREIMAGE.COM; CINDERELLA: SCOTT WEINER/RETNA; AC/DC: PIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/RETNA

Anderson in the "Fall Behind Me" video

TC We really liked it, but it's not at all like our band. They're so bad to each other.

AR It was so f—ed up to see how long everyone kept really weird stuff inside, all these little high school-type things, they really, really let it get to them, and they're just finding out when they're 40.

BA But they're men. We know—we have emotions, but we work them out. Like, if we're bummed out about something, we just have to remember that we get so much positive stuff from each other, that the ratio is so good—you get a whole career and all these good memories and basically your whole life from a person. If they do one little thing that bums you out, it doesn't really matter so much in comparison to everything you get from them.

TC [*Deadpans*] That's so emo.

"WE DON'T CARE IF PEOPLE THINK WE'RE NOT THE COOLEST THING ON THE PLANET; WE JUST CARE ABOUT BEING A ★ REALLY GOOD ROCK BAND."

...LABELING THEIR SOUND

TC It's hard calling ourselves rock & roll, even though that's what I feel like we are: a pretty straight-ahead rock band. But you can't just say that anymore. You have to be heavy, or you have to be—I don't even know what you call a band like Linkin Park or Chevelle—but they're pretty different from what we play.

AR Emo is basically nü-metal now. And it doesn't really sound like it did when we were younger. Now it's just cute young guys screaming. When I turn on MTV, I see overproduced rock, no matter what they call it.

...BEING IN A GIRL BAND

AR There are other girl bands that we'll come across, but they're either making a totally different kind of music or they're just different types of people. Their goal isn't to be one of the greatest bands ever; their goal is more like to be hot or wear really cool clothes. Or to capture one aesthetic but not necessarily be good. There are a lot of girl bands that have a cool vibe and people say, "Oh, they're way cooler than the Donnas"—they're way mor this or that, more trendy in some way—but they're usually no very good at their instruments. And that's kind of our goal. W don't care if people think we're not the coolest thing on the planet we just care about being a really good rock band.

TC Sahara Hotnights are really more similar to us than mos bands—they're really close in age, and the way they starte their careers, and their aesthetic. And they're normal, too.

BA When we hang out with Sahara Hotnights, we'll sit aroun and compare stories about horrible video treatments that peopl have written for us. Like this one where we're all in a pink car peted room and there are a bunch of kittens, and then I get nosebleed. Things that just don't make sense. But mostly it feel like we're on our own. It's lonely at the top. [*Laughs*]

...RECORD RELEASE PARTIES

AR They kind of suck. Playing is a lot more work than just a hal hour on stage—you gotta warm up, and it's nerve-racking. Yo get nervous hours before, and you can't reall do anything.

BA If it was really a party for us, we'd have cool band play and we'd watch them and ge wasted. [*Laughs*]

...THEIR NEW ALBUM

BA We experimented a lot. *Gold Medal* is dif ferent for us. We slowed things down a littl bit; we got a little darker and a little deepe in the lyrics.

TC I think we also tried to make this record little more danceable. They're still rock & rol songs obviously, but hanging around th house listening, you can find the groove an then dance to it, instead of just heshing.

...THE FUTURE OF THE DONNAS

AR We've never considered breaking up. There was a time whe we thought we were gonna go to college. We didn't make an money in our band, or tour, really. It was just a show every few months, and that's how it had been all through high school; noth ing wild ever happened, you know? We didn't have any videos o a record deal, so it just seemed like we'd stay together—no break up, but not really do anything of note for a while. Just g to school, and do it when we were home again.

BA The band had always come second to school anyway; we were used to it—we went to school, and then we would play when we had time.

AR A big goal of ours is to prove that an all-girl band can be the same as the Rolling Stones or Aerosmith, you know? A career that lasts. You don't have to just hit a certain age and it's over. I think that happens to a lot of women in bands, where you pass a certain age and suddenly, "Oh, you're not hot, so you have to quit."

TC I think [wanting to be good musicians] is one of the reasons we're so into staying together and working really hard to get played on the radio, and really hard to be out there. So hopefully other girls will too. And maybe one day it won't be such a bizarre thing that there's an all-girl band. ■